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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/12/07

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, September 11

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

September 12, 2007

09:33

Met at the Kantei with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yosano and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ono. Followed by former Defense Vice Minister Moriya. Later met incoming and outgoing Vice Agriculture Ministers Shirasu and Kobayashi.

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10:02

Attended a cabinet meeting. Met Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Masuda. Followed by Election Bureau Director General Suga.

12:03

Attended a meeting of the government and ruling camp liaison conference. Later, met Secretary General Aso.

13:10

Met New Komeito President Ota. Followed by former Secretary General Nakagawa.

14:37

Met Tax Research Council Chairman Tsushima.

17:25

Returned to his official residence.

4) MSDF-fueled coalition forces interdicted eight times, mostly piracies, in Indian Ocean; Terrorist groups unable to move through area

SANKEI (Top play) (Full)

September 12, 2007

The coalition forces composed of 11 countries, including the United States and Britain, which have been engaged in operations in the Indian Ocean as part of the antiterrorism operations in and near Afghanistan have interdicted eight times, including piracies, over five-and-a-half years' time, a Japan-US military source revealed yesterday. Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force has been providing naval vessels of those countries with water and fuel under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. The fruits of the coalition forces remained unclear. The revealed cases have proven that the MSDF mission has actually contributing to safety in the Indian Ocean.

Following 9/11, forces of the United States, Britain and other countries launched the antiterrorism operations in and near Afghanistan. Islamic militants have reportedly been transporting drugs and weaponry and ammunition via Iran from Afghanistan and Pakistan or via the Indian Ocean. In order to block the transport of such materials that could result in terrorism, naval vessels of 11 countries, including the United States, Britain and France, have been engaged in activities to inspect and seize terrorist-related ships in the Indian Ocean.

Enacting the Antiterrorism Law in October 2001, Japan has sent MSDF supply ships and a destroyer to the Indian Ocean. Japan's services to provide fuel and water to naval vessels and helicopters in the Indian Ocean have won high recognition internationally. But actual results accomplished by the foreign vessels have not been made public for such reasons as that revelation might undermine the

deterrence against terrorism or that they are connected with intelligence. This is the first time that specific achievements have been disclosed.

According to the Japan-US military source, a large part of the eight cases cracked by this past June was piracy against tankers, commercial ships and fishing boats that did not involve any Islamic terrorist groups, such as the Al Qaeda and Taliban. This seems to show that activities by the coalition forces and MSDF have been

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serving as deterrence against the maritime movement of terrorists.

5) US rear admiral: "Even if MSDF discontinues refueling mission, it would be manageable," but stresses significance of participation in coalition

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)

September 12, 2007

Furumoto, Manama (Bahrain)

Senior officers from the Coalition of the Willing responded to an interview with the Mainichi Shimbun and other news companies on the morning of Sept. 11, local time, at the US Navy 5th Fleet Headquarters. In Japan, deliberations on the issue of whether to extend the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law will soon start full swing in the current extraordinary Diet session. These officers expressed their expectations for the continuation of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission.

United States Naval Forces Central Command Deputy Commander Rear Admiral Swift said: "If the MSDF discontinues refueling services, it will bring a major loss, but we will be able to cope," adding: "The real problem is that Japan would no longer play a role (in the Coalition of the Willing)." He thus stressed the significance of Japan's participation in the coalition, rather than the contents of its operations themselves.

Pakistani Navy Commodore Hasham, who serves as commander for the task force which MSDF troops has joined, stated: "If the MSDF discontinues its mission, the Pakistani Navy will suffer the most serious damage. Operations by our task force's naval vessels are expected to decline by about 40 PERCENT ."

Hasham, though, indicated that the Pakistani Navy would not stop its operations immediately even if Japan withdraws MSDF troops. He said: "We must take responsibility over the long run to maintain the security of this region."

6) Pakistani Navy can operate with oil supplied by other countries than Japan

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)

September 12, 2007

It has been learned that Pakistani naval ships are highly considered to be able to operate even with oil supplied by other countries than Japan, such as the United States, although it has been said that high-quality fuel supplied by Japan is necessary for Pakistan's operations. This view apparently contradicts an explanation by the Japanese and US governments and will destroy one of the grounds for Japan's dispatch of Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) troops. This also might have some impact on Diet deliberations on new legislation designed to extend the MSDF mission

In a press conference yesterday, MSDF Chief of Staff Admiral Eiji Yoshikawa said: "I do not think Pakistani ships cannot operate with fuel of other countries than Japan," adding that supplies by other participant countries than Japan, such as the US, should be "basically possible."

Yoshikawa emphasized the high quality of fuel supplied by the MSDF,

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saying: "It is our policy to provide very clear oil by using a fuel cleaning device." But he also said: "(Other refueling vessels) also install a fuel cleaning device."

A former Japan Defense Agency chief explained why the US wants Japan to continue to provide Pakistan with oil: "It is free. In addition, the Pakistani people would be upset if their navy were to receive oil from the US."

In an interview with the Asahi Shimbun on Aug. 3, US Ambassador to Japan Schieffer called on Japan to continue refueling operations, remarking: "High-quality oil is necessary for Pakistani Navy destroyers. Unless Japan joins the operations, there may be some effect on the ongoing Pakistani operations."

Foreign Ministry's Vice Minister Shotaro Yachi also said in an interview on Sept. 10:

"To put them in the terms of automobiles, Pakistani Navy vessels need high-octane gasoline. Only SDF refueling vessels can provide it. If Japan discontinues refueling service, it will become difficult (for Pakistan) to continue operations."

7) Continuation of MSDF refueling operations: Prime minister seeks solidarity; Cabinet ministers support his staking premiership on issue

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
September 12, 2007

Regarding the terrorist attacks on the US, which marked the 6th anniversary yesterday, Minister Shinzo Abe during a liaison council meeting between the government and the ruling parties held the same day stressed, "A large number of people from various countries engaged in international contribution activities in Afghanistan died in terrorist attacks. The fight against terrorism is continuing. It is one of the top agenda items that should be dealt with by countries throughout the world."

He then sought solidarity between the government and the ruling bloc for Diet passage during the current session of a bill allowing the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to continue refueling operations in the Indian Ocean. He noted: "In order for Japan to live up to great expectations that it contribute to the peace and security of the international community, it is imperative for it to continue the operations."

In response, New Komeito Chairman Akihiro Ota came around to Abe's stance, saying, "The MSDF's activities are based on a United Nations resolution. They should be continued for the sake of Japan's national interest." However, he also added, "Public understanding is not sufficient. The government needs to make efforts to gain understanding from the public."

Following Abe's statement that he would stake his premiership on the continuation of the MSDF refueling operations, a number of cabinet ministers supported his resolve in press conferences held the same day.

State Minister in charge of Financial and Administrative Reform Yoshimi Watanabe praised Abe's resolve, noting, "The prime minister indicated his indomitable resolve. It was graceful of him." To a

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question that the prime minister could lose his power base, he replied: "On the contrary, he will strengthen his power base. His statement carries special weight. It is a very serious thing for politicians to make such a statement."

Justice Minister Kunio Hatoyama said, "I do not take it as an indication of his resignation." He explained, "The prime minister is a very pure person. I interpret it that he made that statement because of his perception on his commitment to the international community and the heavy responsibility he bears."

8) New antiterrorism legislation that will limit the MSDF's mission to supply of oil, water likely to get cabinet approval, possibly on Sept. 21

SANKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
September 12, 2007

The government yesterday sketched out new legislation to replace the current Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. This new bill will be approved at a cabinet meeting possibly on Sept. 21. This bill will limit the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) operations in the Indian Ocean to the supply of oil and water to vessels from 11 countries, including the United States and Britain. The bill will be temporary legislation with a one- or two-year term time limit. All missions will be in detail specified in the bill, so the bill will have no stipulation requiring the government to obtain Diet approval of the MSDF's activities. At a press briefing yesterday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano indicated a plan to submit the bill to the Diet after both houses' budget committees' meetings, which are to occur sometime between Sept. 18 and Sept. 20. The government's and the ruling coalition's plan is that if the bill is rejected by the Upper House, which the opposition bloc now controls, they will again put the bill to a vote in the Lower House and approve it.

Until recently the government and the ruling parties had prepared a bill extending the current Antiterrorism Law, which stipulates that the term of the MSDF deployment is to expire on Nov. 1. But the opposition parties, including the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), have made clear their opposition to the bill, so the government and the ruling bloc have now judged it will be difficult to revise the law before its expiration. As a result, they turned around their previous policy and decided to come up with a new bill.

9) DPJ's Ozawa declares opposition to new antiterror legislation in strongly forestalling the government's move for revote

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
September 12, 2007

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ or Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa held a press briefing yesterday at party headquarters and referred to new legislation the government and the ruling coalition are considering submitting to the current Diet session as a replacement of the current Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. Arguing, "The Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) support for the US forces obviously means exercising the right to collective self-defense. Whatever sophistry the government may use, this does not change," Ozawa declared his intention to oppose new legislation.

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The government and the ruling coalition are hinting that if the DPJ votes down the new legislation in the Upper House, they will again put it to a vote in the Lower House and approve it by a two-thirds majority. In this regard, Ozawa noted, "The results of the July Upper House election are the expression of the public's will. Politicians must recognize it properly." In addition, Ozawa strongly attempted to forestall the move by the government and the ruling parties, saying, "This is a matter of insight of the person in power."

Some in the opposition bloc are insisting that the option of submitting a censure motion against the prime minister should be considered if the ruling bloc adopts the bill by re-voting, on the grounds that it has ignored public opinion. But Ozawa avoided commenting on this matter, noting, "It's too early to mention a censure motion. No one can tell what will happen in the days ahead."

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has proposed holding a one-on-one meeting with Ozawa to discuss how to deal with new legislation, but Ozawa indicated he was negative about that proposal, saying, "We should make it a rule to have talks in an open manner."

10) DPJ to pursue government over suspicions for MSDF's refueling US vessels engaged in operations in Iraq

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 12, 2007

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) yesterday decided to call on the government to present internal documents concerning the actual state of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operations in the Indian Ocean and if the DPJ judges the documents are insufficient, it will propose exercising the right to investigate state affairs. The DPJ is suspecting that the MSDF might have refueled US vessels heading for Iraq to be engaged in the campaign there by deviating from the purpose of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. The DPJ will urge the government to disclose details of the refueling activities, such as the names of vessels, their missions, and the locations of refueling. By pursuing the government about the suspicions that the refueling operations might have been linked to the Iraq campaign, the DPJ aims to seek the public's understanding about its opposition to continuing the refueling mission.

Bolstered by the fact that it is now the first party in the Upper House, the DPJ intends to repeatedly call on the government to disclose information.

In debate in the Diet regarding an extension of the refueling operations, the DPJ will give the first priority to investigation into the allegation that the MSDF might have refueled vessels heading for Iraq. By using a preliminary investigation the Lower House's research bureau will conduct at the request by at least 40 Lower House members, the DPJ will call for disclosure of (1) names of vessels that received refueling, (2) their missions and operations after refueling, and (3) locations of refueling. If the government's answers to these questions are not satisfactory, the DPJ will then exercise the right to investigate state affairs at the Upper House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense and demand in accordance with Article 104 of the Diet Law that the government

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should disclose records.

House of Representatives member Kenji Eda (independent) pointed out this suspicion based on his survey of the US Naval Forces Central Command/US 5th Fleet's website. In a document entitled "Operation Iraqi Freedom" posted on the website, there was the passage saying that "The Japanese government has contributed 86,629,675 gallons of oil worth 76 million dollars." This passage, however, was deleted afterwards.

The Japanese government denied Eda's allegation with Defense Minister Komura arguing, "He misread it." The government has explained that Japan has refueled vessels from the United States and other countries taking part in operations that are part of "Operation Enduring Freedom," which means the war in Afghanistan. But the government has not given any detailed explanation about the actual state of US forces' activities. In a question-and-answer session in the Upper House in April 2005, then Defense Agency Director-General Yoshinori Ono, when asked whether oil provided by Japan would be used for the Iraq operations, answered, "It's difficult to identify the oil provided." This reply has been taken by some in the DPJ as implying the possibility that oil provided by Japan may have been used for the Iraq war.

Considering these circumstances, the DPJ has insisted that information available to the public is very limited. On Sept. 10, the DPJ's House of Councilors member Kun Hakushin rendered a written inquiry to the government asking, "Has Japan provided anything to other countries' vessels whose major missions are to take part in the operations in Iraq?"

11) DPJ eyes censure motion if ruling camp resorts to Lower House revote on new antiterrorism law

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)

September 12, 2007

The Diet will kick off a full debate between the ruling and opposition camps today, starting with representative interpellations on Prime Minister Abe's policy speech. In the House of Councillors, the opposition holds a majority. Under such a situation, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) tried to shake the Abe administration yesterday, implying a possible submission of a censure resolution and an exercise of its investigative power in national politics.

The government and the ruling camp plan to submit a bill for a new law to replace the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which expires Nov. 1. In this connection, DPJ Upper House Secretary General Kenji Hirata said in a press conference yesterday: "If the ruling camp readopts the bill with two-thirds approval (in the House of Representatives) over public opposition, public criticism of the ruling parties will inevitably grow stronger. The ruling parties should not resort to this means." Asked if the DPJ file a censure motion against the prime minister if the ruling camp re-passes the bill in the Lower House, Hirata said: "We naturally should have this possibility in mind."

12) LDP put on hold submission of bill amending Political Fund Control Law due to deep-seated cautious view on attaching receipts for expenditures topping 1 yen

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NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
September 12, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership yesterday decided not to submit to the current Diet session a bill to further amend the Political Fund Control Law intended to introduce a stricter standard mandating the attaching of receipts for expenditures over 1 yen. It has instead started looking into the possibility of submitting it in the next regular Diet session or later. Its judgment is that given a cautious view on the idea deep-rooted in the party, it would be difficult to unify views of party members before the Diet session ends. The move is bound to expose the LDP's inability to come up with a specific proposal on its politics and money problem, one factor for the crushing defeat of the party in the July Upper House election.

Following the defeat in the Upper House election, the former leadership has drafted an amendment to the Political Fund Control Law that would obligate political organizations involving politicians to attach receipts for operational expenditures (excluding personnel expenses) topping 1 yen. However, a large number of party members are cautious about the idea. Secretary General Taro Aso during a press briefing on Sept. 4 indicated his intention to undertake further coordination of views. He noted, "We must sort out views of party members once more and work them out properly."

13) DPJ to submit three bills to Upper House, giving up alternative antiterrorism legislation

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)  
September 12, 2007

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) decided yesterday to submit to the current extraordinary Diet session a bill to ban the use of pension premiums to other purposes than pension benefits, a bill to revised the Political Funds Control Law requiring politicians to attach to their fund reports receipts for expenditures one yen or more, and a bill to rescind the Iraq Reconstruction Special Measures Law. The three bills will be submitted to the House of Councillors, which is now controlled by the opposition camp. The largest opposition party, however, decided not to submit legislation to assist for the Afghan people's livelihood as an alternate to the current Antiterrorism Law, even though the party had planned such.

The aim is to gear up to go on the offensive in Diet debate on the pension issue and politics-and-money scandals, which were main

causes for the DPJ's big win in the July House of Councillors election.

The pension bill stipulates that pension premiums would be used only for benefits and administrative fees and other expenses would be paid by national coffers. The bill will be re-submitted to the ongoing session since it was scrapped at the August extraordinary session. The DPJ has judged that the public still have a strong interest in the pension issue since irregularities have been discovered in succession.

The DPJ confirmed yesterday in a meeting of its Political Reform Promotion Headquarters the submission of the bill revising the Political Funds Control Law, aiming at highlighting the difference with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its coalition

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partner New Komeito, which are reluctant about attaching to political fund reports receipts for every item costing one yen or more.

Regarding providing aid to the Afghan people, which the DPJ has been considering as an alternative measure to the extension of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, based on which the Maritime Self-Defense Force has carried out its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa rejected the possibility of presenting such a bill in a press conference yesterday. He said: "I wonder why a bill is needed to assist the people's livelihood." The main opposition party intends to emphasize its stance of criticizing the Abe administration's entire foreign policy by submitting a bill to scrap the Iraq reconstruction assistance special measures law.

14) DPJ refuses to hold consultations with ruling coalition

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)  
September 12, 2007

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has decided to refuse any requests from the government and ruling coalition to hold consultations on an extension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. Chances are slim that the DPJ will agree to an extension of the MSDF's refueling operation. The possibility is extremely low that new legislation to continue the MSDF's mission will be passed through the Diet amicably.

The government and ruling camp aim to reach agreement on this issue with the DPJ thorough negotiations. Some in the government and ruling coalition are calling for holding working-level consultations between the ruling and opposition camps. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his expectations for direct talks with DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa.

At a press briefing yesterday, however, Ozawa revealed that he would not hold any party-head talks, saying: "We will be able to hold debate at the Diet. I think consultations at the committees and other occasions should be open to the public."

The DPJ has determined that if it holds consultations with the government and ruling parties, the public will see them as murky negotiations. Therefore, the main opposition party has decided to respond to Diet deliberations, refusing both the party-head talks and the working-level consultations.

15) DPJ to pick candidates for next Lower House election in this month

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
September 12, 2007

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) decided yesterday to hold a meeting on Oct. 5 of the secretaries general of its prefectural chapters, expecting that the House of Representatives may be dissolved before the end of this year and a snap election called. The DPJ will pick candidates for the next Lower House election within September and the party leadership will replace candidates whom it judges have no chance to win.

Election Campaign Committee Chairman Hirotaka Akamatsu issued on Sept. 10 instructions to the prefectural chapters, in which he

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instructed them to complete the selection of candidates by Sept. 30. Of the 300 single-seat constituencies, the party has yet to field candidates for 79 electoral districts. The party headquarters will file those the party picked thorough advertisement as candidates in constituencies in which no candidate has not been fielded.

Akamatsu sent instructions on Sept. 30 to incumbent Lower House members and candidates-to-be calling on them to (1) increase supporters and strengthen relations with their supporting organizations, (2) boost street activities and exchanges with voters, and (3) increase posters, party members, and supporters.

16) Japan to disburse 57 million yen to IAEA for monitoring North Korea

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
September 12, 2007

The Japanese government during an IAEA board meeting held on Sept. 11 announced a plan to disburse 500,000 dollars (approximately 57 million yen) for the monitoring and inspection of nuclear activities in North Korea. The US, which had pledged the disbursement of 513,000 dollars at the emergency board meeting in July, also released a plan to extend another 1.8 billion dollars. The IAEA has calculated that the monitoring and inspection activities would need 1.7 million euro or approximately 268 million yen for the first year and 2.2 million euro for the second year and asked its member nations for additional contributions.

As of Sept. 11, only Japan and the US have pledged to disburse funds for the monitoring and inspection activities by the IAEA. The European Union noted in the meeting that it would look into such a possibility.

The funds will be used for the purchases of monitoring equipment and the cost of dispatching IAEA personnel to continue monitoring and inspection activities at Yongbyon facilities in North Korea.

The Japanese government had announced a policy of not providing any aid, including energy aid, as long as the abduction issue remains unsettled. It takes the stand that since the measure this time is intended to contribute for the IAEA's monitoring and inspection activities, it does not fall under direct assistance to North Korea.

SCHIEFFER